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# A State Department Security Case

## *The Story of an Employee Dismissed After 8-Month F. B. I. Investigation, With the Nature of the Charges Against Him Never Revealed*

By Bert Andrews

WASHINGTON, Nov. 1.—A detailed description was obtained today of the methods used by the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation to rid the department of persons believed to be disloyal or bad security risks. It is the first such description to be published.

It deals with the case of one individual who was summarily dismissed from his State Department job.

He was regarded by the department, on the basis of a report from the F. B. I. on the results of eight months of shadowing him, as a bad security risk. He was not accused of disloyalty.

The name of the individual cannot be revealed because, according to his associates, he is afraid of "reprisals." They do not say what he means by "reprisals."

The description of what happened to this man comes entirely from documents which will be quoted from here. Some documents contain his own statements. Some are from State Department sources or from a State Department hearing.

Because the department has never revealed—even to him—the nature of the charges against him, there is no way for any one outside the top echelon of the department to know just what he did or is accused of having done.

There is no way for any one outside the top echelon to know whether the individual is a victim of a "witch hunt" or is a man guilty of offenses that might warrant even greater punishment than dismissal.

This descriptive article, therefore, is not to be construed as criticism or defense of the State Department's action or as criticism or defense of the record of the man involved.

It is, rather, a point-by-point story of how the investigation was conducted by the F. B. I. and of what the State Department did—a story entirely based on documents.

Some inquiries were made today at the State Department concerning the case and other similar cases. Three developments ensued.

First, the State Department takes the stand that in such cases it cannot reveal the nature of the charges to the individual concerned lest it thereby "give away" all that it may have learned about him and lest it tip the investigators' hand to other persons with whom the individual may have associated.

Second, a State Department source acknowledged that it was entirely conceivable that an entirely innocent man might be made the victim of a frame-up, granting the utility of possibility that sufficient enemies ganged up on him. The source acknowledged something even more important—that under present procedure such an innocent man would have no more recourse, no more chance of demanding and getting the charges against him, than would, say, an individual guilty of disloyalty and violating security.

Third, the Department said it would be very glad if some system of review could be established which would insure any accused individual of the right to have a real review made of his case—a review that would satisfy every one that no violation of civil liberties had been committed.

Some such system may be worked out.

Meanwhile, on the basis of the documents in the one case, here are some of the major things that emerged:

1. The man worked for the government from February, 1942, to the date he was "severed"—June 23, 1947.

2. He worked successively for the Office of Price Administration, the War Production Board, the Foreign Economic Administration and the State Department.

3. In the late summer of 1946 the F. B. I. put two agents on him. They kept close watch on his "daily comings and goings." They learned the identities of people he talked to. They took a picture of him one day as he crossed the street with a woman employee in the office he was in at the time. Subsequently they showed the picture to his wife—in his presence.

4. In April, 1947, the agents visited him and his wife. They questioned them closely about their past years and the people

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they knew. That was when they showed her the picture.

5. In June, 1947, he was dismissed "without any statement of charges."

6. He received a "hearing" in July before four State Department superiors. He was told then that it was not in the nature of an appeal, that the case was closed as far as the department was concerned, but that the law did not prohibit his employment by any other agency of the government.

7. He insists that he is not a Communist, as the F. B. I. agents alleged when they called on him, and that his only "association with representatives of foreign powers" was in the course of his official duties at the State Department. The talk of the F. B. I. men was never formalized in charges.

8. He feels he is entitled to learn the charges against him and have an opportunity to answer them. He offered, at the "hearing," to send additional information, and was told to go ahead—"you send it over and we'll slap it in the file."

9. He was denied the right to resign.

10. He was denied the right to see George C. Marshall, Secretary of State.

Those are the major undisputed facts.

### The Documents in the Case

The documents from which come the description of how the State Department and the F. B. I. functioned in the case are these:

1. The affidavit given by the man to persons interested in his case. It will be reproduced here in full, save for names.

2. The transcript of the State Department "hearing." It will be reproduced in part.

3. A subsequent affidavit made by the man.

4. A paragraph from a letter by a State Department official to an associate of the man.

### Text of Affidavit

The text of the adavit in which the man tells of his questioning by the F. B. I. and subsequent developments follows in full except for deletion of all names:

"1. On the evening of April 15, 1947, two F.B.I. agents visited my home from 7:30 to 9:30 p. m., and they charged my wife and me with having been members of the Communist party in Harlem, N. Y., some time about the year 1935, and further stated that I was a high official. (Note: I had not yet met my wife in 1935.) The charge was also made that we were subsequently transferred to Washington, D. C.

"They gave no indication whatsoever as to the source of the information except to say that they knew it came good information. I denied the allegation, and told them I never had spent time in Harlem except to use the subway when I went to ——— College because at that time I was living in the Bronx.

"Most of the evening was spent in recalling my daily comings and goings for the past eight months since they had followed me. They knew with whom I had lunch, who visited my home and whom I visited. They questioned me about the occasions when I handed material to any one, which invariably turned out to be my thesis (for a Ph.D. degree).

### Lunch and a Concert

"They questioned me about —— whom I met at W.P.B. I had lunch with him occasionally, visited him once with my family and we attended a concert with him and his wife once. He was one of the persons to whom the F.B.I. saw me give a copy of my dissertation. I was also questioned about ——— whom I got to know only from her correspondence when she was abroad on the ——— mission because I took ———'s place when he was in Japan. Upon her return she visited my house twice; we visited her twice.

"Questions were also asked about ——— whom I knew at college and who was assigned to my division after he was discharged from the Army. I had lunch with him occasionally but never saw him socially.

"They asked why I handed a letter to ——— It was his own mail from the University of ——— concerning a position which he subsequently obtained. Since he had no permanent residence in Washington because he was contemplating leaving, he used my home as a mailing address and also stayed with us for a short time, late in the summer of 1946. I worked with him at ——— (a government agency).

"I was asked about ——— I don't know him at all, having met him only on two occasions, both business meetings attended by other members of the State Department.

### A Check for Nursery School

"They asked me about a check which they saw me receive from ——— (whose wife had worked with my wife). I borrowed some money to make an advance payment for nursery school two days before pay day. One week later I repaid him, and have the canceled check.

"They accused me of trying to evade them one day at the Social Security Building because I went back and up from the second floor to the lunchroom twice. I was looking for the two girls whom I had hired to type my thesis. I couldn't find them in their offices and was told they were in the lunchroom. I ran down there, couldn't find them, dashed up again and then down again, went back and forth found them. I never suspected that I was being followed, then or any other time.

"They also photographed me with a girl from the office when she and I crossed the street for coffee. They pulled this picture out and showed it to my wife.

"2. The day following the F. B. I. visit, I reported it to my supervisors ——— and ——— offering to resign if this accusation should result in a lack of confidence in me. On my way to work that morning I rode with ———, told him about it. He said that, based on his long experience as an administrator, I was a dead duck whether innocent or guilty because of the widespread hysteria in Washington at this time.

### Offer to Resign Refused

"——— turned down my offer to resign and assured me of his complete confidence. He consulted with ——— over the phone, who was out due to illness and who expressed similar confidence in me. Mr. ——— and Mr. ——— saw ——— in place of ——— who was out. Mr. ——— told them the department would conduct its own investigation, keep ——— informed and if there were any doubt I would have ample opportunity to resign.

"3. The State Department security officers examined me for a total of twelve hours at intervals during May and June of 1947. ——— told me to co-operate fully, and this I did. They questioned me on my opinions, friends, interests, jobs, associates, etc. I offered them twenty-nine specimens of my published and unpublished writings from 1933 on. Nothing in these interviews appeared to incriminate me in any way.

"4. During the period from April 15 to June 23, when my job was terminated, the office had so much confidence in me and my ability that steps were taken for my promotion. In the early part of June I was given a private office, with a staff and secretary, and put in charge of ———.

"5. On June 23, 1947, at 5:30 p. m., I was handed a letter by an administrative officer and signed by ——— to the effect that as of that moment my services were terminated "in the interest of the United States". This I was summarily fired without a hearing or knowledge of charges or accusers.

### Barred From Office

"6. When I returned the following morning to collect my personal belongings, the administrative officer told ——— to get me out of the office. To this day I have not gained access to my desk to clear out my personal goods.

"7. Reaction among my colleagues and superiors was one of ———

bewilderment, consternation and resentment against the procedure. Messrs. ——, ——, —— and —— went to —— at various times to express confidence in me and to discover the basis for the action and to try to obtain a hearing for me. Nothing ever came of this. I have in my possession copies of letters sent by my colleagues to Messrs. —— and —— expressing their confidence in me.

"8. I sent a letter on June 30, 1947, to Mr. —— protesting the action and asking for a fair hearing. So far I have received no reply.

"9. Shortly after the dismissal Mr. —— of the personnel division of the department telephoned me to appear within a day before a committee of three, including himself, to make a statement. When I asked him what the charges were on which to base the statement, he read me the department's press release. When I appeared before the panel the next day and again asked for the charges, again I heard the press release. They said they would neither ask nor answer questions. I was to say anything I pleased which I believed brought on the action. I spoke for about a half an hour stating that I was innocent of anything which could reflect on my loyalty. I also requested an interview with Mr. Marshall.

### Calls Marshall in Error

"10. A news article appeared about the next day in 'The Washington Post' in which Mr. Marshall stated that all ten dismissed persons knew why they were dismissed and that none had appealed to him personally. He was in error on both these points. Editorials in 'The Washington Post' on July 5 and 11 severely criticized the department for the arbitrary dismissal of the ten persons.

"11. At present I am tending every effort to obtain a hearing. In all my efforts I get at most from responsible members of the department pious, well meaning statements about a possible hearing at some vague future time."

The "hearing" to which the man involved referred in his point No. 9 was held on July 2, 1947, before a four-man panel. It was headed by Hamilton Robinson, director of the Office of Controls of the State Department. On it were three of his subordinates, Arch K. Jean, Saxton Bradford and Thomas E. Hoffman.

Mr. Robinson began by reading a State Department press release of June 27, which said:

"The State Department has terminated the services of ten em-

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ployees against whom derogatory information has been developed through investigation. In taking this action, the department followed its policy of dropping employees from its rolls where substantial doubts exists as to their security. In a few of these cases, other administrative considerations entered into the decision to terminate the employees concerned."

### A Portion of the "Hearing"

Mr. Robinson went on to say that Mr. Blank, as he will be called hereafter, could say anything he wanted for the record, since the law did not prohibit his employment by any other government agency. He emphasized, however, that the proceedings were final as far as the department was concerned. Enough of the subsequent talk at the "hearing" is presented herewith to give the flavor of the proceedings.

Mr. Robinson: "And so we are delighted to listen to any statement that you care to make on that basis."

Mr. Blank: "As I told Mr. Jean when he phoned me yesterday, it is very difficult to make a statement, as I am completely bewildered by what it's about. You gentlemen can appreciate that the press release doesn't say very much, anyway, in any one specific case. I did have the opportunity of being called by the department security people. I think for about twelve hours of detailed questioning, at which I believe I supplied most of the information. . . .

"I really, frankly don't know what to say, since I don't know what the charges are. The result of these hearings—I don't think anything came out that I would consider to be a charge. I mean, I can make a general statement as to what I think my own loyalty position is. I have no doubt in my own mind as to my own loyalty. I don't think I have ever been tempted in that direction or ever committed any act that would be considered disloyal to the government. I have never jeopardized the security of the department of the government.

### Handled Aircraft Data

"I came down here over five years ago to work for the government to help the war effort. I found the kind of work that I was interested in, the encouragement I got from my superiors, in other jobs and my present one, indicated their willingness to see me continue, and at no time did any question ever arise as to my loyalty. . . .

"In the middle of the war, not only did I handle production data, but I handled design data of not only the contemporary aircraft but of future aircraft. I think I was cleared by G-2. I have never been questioned by anybody. I was cleared by F. E. A., have always been cleared, so that I have no idea of anything concrete. . . .

"So you do have this detailed knowledge of what I have done in the past. I don't know whether I brought the attention of the department or whether they had the information themselves, as to the fact that—I forget the date, about two months ago—the F. B. I. visited me and I gave the department all the details, but there was nothing concrete brought out in any of that information. I thought I had satisfied every question they brought up."

Mr. Robinson: "Well, we realize the difficulty you are in. On the other hand, I'd suggest that you might think back over your own career and perhaps in your own mind delve into some of the factors that have gone into your career which you think might have been subject to question and see what they are and see whether you'd like to explain or make any statement with regard to any of them. that is about the best I can do as far as helping you along that line."

### Sees "Something Going On"

Mr. Blank: "Well as you appreciate, I have been thinking about anything in my career in the past that could be subject to question, and I frankly don't see anything. I think there is something going on in Washington which the F. B. I. is interested in of which I have no idea. I have heard they have seen from forty to sixty people. They are after something. They questioned me in detail about certain people I knew, people I had worked with, mainly, at F. E. A. and W. P. B. What they are after I don't know. There is something that is bothering them, and I am bewildered by what they are after. Perhaps there is something going on; I feel if there is, I am outside the picture.

"By some accident or quirk, I have worked with some of these people whom I didn't even see socially. I happened to get into a car club with somebody the question came up about. I am at a loss to go into any detail. They accused me . . . of being a Communist, but, as I pointed out to the security people, I have denied that point. There was no evidence raised. I admitted that when I went to - - - - , when I taught there, I attended all kinds of meetings that were held on the campus, but never joined any organization.

"The security people made me swear by the fact under oath that I was not a Communist nor was I affiliated to a long list of organizations which they asked me questions about. All I know is that this action taken is—well, the punishment doesn't fit the alleged crime. I mean, I don't know whether you gentlemen realize what you have done to me, not you personally, but what the department has done—completely blackballed me from earning a living in the future. I don't know where to turn."

### Asks for a Reason

Mr. Robinson: "I think you can be assured that the department was not unaware of those aspects of it."

Mr. Blank: "On what basis has the department done something like that, without even telling me? I am just bewildered about it. I am trying to be as frank as a possibly can."

Mr. Robinson: "The only way I can suggest helping you is that you just go ahead and spill your feelings about all the things that you might think might have been involved."

Mr. Blank: "It's very difficult. I mean, I once helped edit a pamphlet on 'What Price Milk?' which criticized milk companies for their large profits. My whole career has been in teaching and working; it is extremely difficult for me to make any statement. I wish you gentlemen could help me by asking questions. I realize you are tied down by a law."

Mr. Jean: "You mentioned that you were associated, through a car club, with some people."

Mr. Blank: "Well, I don't know. I am not associated. I don't know whether they came out of a car club. They asked me about certain people I worked with at F. E. A. There is a rumor going through Washington that they are after Treasury people and people who worked on the so-called 'Morgenthau plan.' I am just in the dark about this; I wish somebody would tell me what it is about. I don't mean—I am just bewildered about this whole thing. Perhaps there are some people I have met and know whose reputations aren't exactly the best, according to certain people, but there is nothing in my actions toward them or toward anything else that would indicate any question of loyalty or anything that I can see. I mean, my very work in the department should be some indication of that.

### Worked Day and Night

"As I understand it, nobody whom I have worked with or worked for has been called in on this . . . . I have worked on the program and they gave me the job of programming it. I was the one who prepared the first material on the stuff. They took my material, they know exactly what I have done since I have been in this department, and I am positive they are willing to testify as to that. They are as mystified as I am about it. My reaction has been completely in accord with what our government has been doing; not only that, but working day and night toward those ends. The F. B. I. followed me and they admitted that they had to come Saturdays and Sundays and nights. They were a little astonished at my working on these programs."

Mr. Jean: "You say you number among your friends people who are frowned upon by others."

Mr. Blank: "Well, I don't know whether they are frowned upon

The investigation brought out that I knew somebody, whom I see occasionally, who works for Russian War Relief. But I knew him because we lived in the same house. I knew many other people in the same house, and I gave the names of other people whom I saw more often than I saw him. As I pointed out to these people, it is not a question of the few people certain people may have something about, but it is a question of all the people I know that should be taken into consideration. But, apparently, the interest is just for the few who are not thought of well.

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and I don't know why these people aren't.

### The Mysterious Thesis

"Mrs. —— I think they questioned me a lot about her—I knew her because she was in the office and came to my house once or twice and I was in her House once or twice; it was a purely social thing. Why they questioned me about her I don't know.

"They questioned me about giving things to certain people; in every case I pointed out it was on my thesis. I finished my doctor's thesis and went around visiting economists in Washington who could read it.

"Once they asked me why I got a check, for example, at lunch. My little boy went to nursery school and I had to pay a $60 bill three days before pay day, and I called a friend of mine and I borrowed $100 and I paid him back a week later. It's things like that that just seem to me to be silly, that are important to other people. I'd like to know what all that means."

Mr. Jean: "Do these people you mention, to your knowledge, express an ideology that differs from American philosophy?"

Mr. Blank: "I frankly have never got that far with them."

Mr. Jean: "Have you seen Mrs. ..... recently?"

### A Dinner Engagement

Mr. Blank: "Yes, her husband got fired and I called her up, and she said they were leaving and I invited them for dinner before they left for New York. I told the security people I called her up because I had heard she had gone to the hospital when she heard her husband was fired. Why that happened I don't know. I just think it is unfortunate that I have come in contact over the last year with certain people that I know nothing about."

Mr. Robinson: "Now, you have said several times 'certain people,' but so far you have only mentioned one or two." . . .

Mr. Blank: "The fact is I gave the security people a terrific list of names. . . . You didn't miss seeing anybody. I'll try—"

Mr. Robinson: "No, if you have already given it—I just wanted to give you the chance to say that if you wanted to."

Mr. Blank: "The fact is, I brought in a typewritten list; not only that, I brought in copies of nineteen specimens of what I wrote since 1933, at least two pieces for each year which I believed would be an indication of the way I thought over a period of years.

"I believe the security people analyzed those documents I brought in, beginning with 1933, did you not?"

Mr. Robinson: "Well, you can be sure everything you have submitted has been considered."

### "Completely Bewildered"

Mr. Blank: "So that is why I am completely bewildered about the whole situation. Did I leave anything out that you think I ought to bring up? We are trying to get the facts out in this, I presume. Do you think I ought to mention anything else? I assume you gentlemen are trying to get at the facts."

Mr. Robinson: "I don't think we can suggest to you things that you ought to discuss. I think it's up to you to decide. As I say, we are trying to help by making suggestions to you, in a general way, which may make your record more complete when it all comes together. But so far as saying you ought to talk about this or you ought to talk about that, I don't see how we can do that. This is your opportunity to say anything that you want."

Mr. Blank: "Gentlemen, it's my 'opportunity' to say anything, but really, to be frank—you gentlemen aren't responsible—it's really not an opportunity. I don't know what to talk about, I mean, I am . . ."

Mr. Robinson: "All right, I withdraw the statement it was an opportunity, if you prefer."

Mr. Blank: "I am not blaming you gentlemen; you are held within certain rules and regulations, but I'd like to know what to talk about and what to say. It's extremely difficult in such a situation. I don't know who said anything about me or what has been said about me, and the press release makes it even worse; I mean, the kind of statement where nothing has been developed. I mean, I am not trying to get mad or anything, I appreciate the situation, but I am involved in a very disastrous way in this. You mentioned about having an opportunity to insert additional stuff—will I get an opportunity after this?"

### Tells of Reassurances

Mr. Robinson: "Anything you want to put in" . . .

Mr. Blank: "Well, I care to make it as complete as possible. The fact is, I came the very next morning that the F.B.I. visited me and went to my superiors and told them the complete story. Mr. —— said I would have nothing to worry about in this thing, that the charges in this consideration were not true, that the security people would look into it, that I should co-operate with the security people, and that if anything did arise I would be called before them. The fact is, I even offered my resignation that very first day, for two reasons: One, I asked the advice of some people and they said with the present state of things in Washington, whether you are right or wrong, once this thing gets started you are out; and secondly, I was in the midst of some very delicate negotiations with gentlemen on the geographic desks, and I told them I didn't want this charge hanging over me to hurt the division in our relations with the geographic people, and they had my resignation and they told me no, they refused to accept it because they felt the charges were unwarranted and if there were anything that I would be given time to resign, and you can verify that" . . .

Mr. Robinson: "I think I might just say for the record here one thing which I believe is worth pointing out and that is that it is fairly clearly indicated in the press release that this action was taken on the ground of a doubt as to security, and what I would like to say for the record is that we carefully bear in mind in all these cases that there is a very definite difference between the word 'security' and the word 'loyalty.' I just want that to be on the record."

### The Difference Explained

Mr. Blank: "May I ask what the difference is? It's not clear to me."

Mr. Robinson: "There's a vast difference between security and loyalty."

Mr. Blank: "I think—may I ask that question?"

Mr. Robinson: "Yes."

Mr. Blank: "To clear up the difference between them, I mean to me, I think one"——

Mr. Robinson: "Well, I'll point out a difference. I think loyalty must necessarily be a conscious proposition. Security, or the lack of it, might be conscious or unconscious. And I think that probably serves the purpose of what I am trying to do, but I am making that statement for the record without any implication as to any conclusion that you should draw from that statement, but you made several statements about that, and I just want to make clear that this action was based, as the press release states, as a matter of security."

Mr. Blank: "You mean that the punishment for an alleged violation of security is more severe than questions of loyalty? What I mean is, assume this whole thing is true about my security, isn't the punishment to deprive me literally of a livelihood in the future, one of the severest penalties you could pay? What have I done, assuming, and I'll assume that you are correct in what you state, I mean, you have completely deprived me of the only things I can do, either working for the government, going back to teaching, or working for private industry—what am I going to tell employers? You are not going to find me lying about it, because they would catch up with me, and I wouldn't lie about it, either. Could I explain this difference between security and loyalty to some kind of college where I am trying to get a teaching job?"

### Material for the File

Mr. Robinson: "I am not suggesting that. I am not even suggesting the distinction is proper in your case; I am merely suggesting one is not necessarily synonymous with the other. I think if you feel that, I don't know whether you feel there is anything you wish to add to this as a statement."

Mr. Blank: "You say I have the opportunity in the future to add things?"

Mr. Robinson: "Yes, you send it over and we'll slap it in the file" . . .

Mr. Blank: "I understand the Secretary is a reasonable man. Is it possible for you gentlemen to make an appointment for me to see him?"

Mr. Robinson: "I'm afraid that isn't our function."

Mr. Blank: "Well, I am making a request anyway. I am not casting aspersions of course on anybody here, but I'd like to get in touch with the final authority on this matter."

Mr. Robinson: "Well, certainly, there is no reason in the world why you shouldn't, but I am afraid we are not in a position to be able to do anything about that. Just as a suggestion, you might want to get some of the people you say have confidence in you, and so forth—"

Mr. Blank: "Well, they are attempting to see certain people. You know that I am trying to do something on my own, of course. Are there any questions?"

### End of the "Hearing"

Mr. Robinson: "Do you have anything further, Arch?"

Mr. Jean: "I have nothing further, no."

Mr. Robinson: "Do you have any phase of it?"

Mr. Blank: "Well, I'd just like to close by reiterating again what I have said before, that, in my own mind and in my own conscience, I have no question as to my own loyalty and my own responsibility to the security of this government. I have a clear conscience completely, so I can only state my sincerity. This whole thing has me completely bewildered."

Mr. Robinson: "Well, I'll just add that if, at any time, you want to add anything further to this, just get in touch with Tom Hoffman and send anything over to him you want to incorporate in the record; that will be all right."

Mr. Blank: "Well, I think they wring me dry in twelve hours of questioning which I brought on myself."

Mr. Robinson: "O. K."

Mr. Blank: "Thank you."

### Two Final Documents

There were two other documents. One was a formal affidavit from the accused man. In it he denied all suggestions that he was a security risk or disloyal, and asked for a hearing.

"I have never done anything to merit the destruction of my reputation, and have always been completely devoted to my country and the State Department," he said in this affidavit.

The other document was a letter from a State Department official to an associate of the accused who had protested the dismissal. This letter said in part:

"Although I believe Mr. —— was generally familiar with the reasons for his dismissal, it was not possible to explain the charges to him for reasons of security.

"Well, I am sure, that the department is one of the most sensitive agencies of the government from a security viewpoint, and, consequently, when a reasonable doubt is raised as to whether the continued employment of an individual would constitute a security risk it is the policy of the department to resolve such doubt in favor of the government."